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THUMB-NAIL SKETCHES

Thumb-nail Sketches

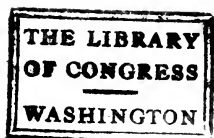
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GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS

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*“Be bold, my book, and do not fear
The cutting Thumb-nail
Or the brow severe.”*

HERRICK'S HESPERIDES.



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MOGLASHEN



THUMB-NAIL SKETCHES

MOGLASHEN



SOME one said that I should visit Beg Island while at Ingonish. But the advice made but

little impression upon my mind at the time. In clear weather it might be seen from the shore, its shape resembling a squatty sugar-loaf upon the horizon.

One morning from my perch in the rocks, where I had securely fastened my canvas with ropes and boulders,—for the wind ever blows in this lati-

tude,—I became conscious of the approaching figure of a man



leaping from rock to rock, his arms waving wildly with the exertion. Evidently he was headed for the spot which I occupied.

I fancied that he had some message from the village for me, perhaps a letter; but a moment's reflection showed me that the semi-weekly mail was not due before the following day.

As he climbed the boulders I could see his face, a red dot in the center of a bushy growth of sandy whiskers which stood out in all directions.

Panting for breath, he reached the spot where I sat, and bounced himself down beside me at the risk of upsetting my color-box.

Cocking his head upon one

side, and rubbing upon his trousers the hand which he had placed directly in the center of my well-covered palette, he ejaculated admiringly, with a sweep of the clean hand, "Hech, mon, but she 'll be a fine peentin' ye 're at."

"Yes?" said I, with an ill-suppressed smile at his predicament. "How did you know I was out here?"

"Aw 'll be speerin' you aff-shoor, an' the hale popilation kens what ye 're at, an' whaur ye are tae, for that matter; but d' ye see? ye 're wastin' ye'r time here. This 'll no be place for the peentin', aw 'll be sayin' to masel' comin' o'er, whan she 'll have Beg Islan'. D' ye ken Beg Islan'?"

"Oh, yes," I said, taking up my palette and endeavoring to repair the havoc his hand had wrought; "I know of it; at least I 've heard of it."

“Of coorse ye ’ll hae heard of it, as well as them that belongs te it, the Moglashens. Aw ’ll be a Moglashen, d’ ye ken? an’, what ’s more, aw en-vite ye te stop wi’ us o’er te Beg Islan’,” he said, wiping his perspiring forehead with the painty hand, and leaving thereon a thin line of new blue, running rainbow fashion with a broader one of ocher. “The fam’ly en-vites ye, d’ ye ken? She ’ll be proud te have ye, mairover.”

He paused and looked longingly at me. I was about to say something in thanks for the proffered hospitality, when he broke forth, “Ye ’ll no be apel te be waverin’ here, whateffer, a-peentin’ on yon,” indicating the canvas with a sweep. “The nor’easter’s due, an’ ’deed she’ll be here the night.”

I saw that the sky did indeed look threatening, and the wind was changing.

“Ef ye ’ll be acceptin’ ma hospitality, aw ’ll take ye ower te Beg Islan’ the night.”

I endeavored to persuade him of the impossibility of this.

“’Deed, then, an’ aw ’ll no leave ye here, so ye mun just pack up ye’r traps, an’ aw ’ll carry ye’r peentin’ for ye.”

As the wind had changed, I saw the folly of remaining on the present spot; there was a narrow gully to be passed, and in certain tides I had been warned that crossing was almost dangerous, for the water surged and boiled through the rocks with tremendous force.

When we came to this place I found that, in preparation for our return, the emissary of the Moglashens had so placed a drift spar that the crossing was comparatively easy. Once upon level ground, or at least that which is called level at In-gonish, his pent-up loquacity

broke forth again, apropos of nothing. “Dinna ye see that the feshin’ ’s no what it use te be? Theer aye an ill-gitted folk here, an’ aw don’t say, d’ ye mind? that it ’s no the hand o’ Providence, for the wracks that ’s been handled here.”

“Were there wreckers here, then, in the olden times?” I asked idly, more to feed the flame of his loquacity than with an interest in the subject.

“In the olden time, is it?” he said. “Wha, mon,”—with a fearful look about, and a finger upraised,—“whist! aw tell ye, aw ’m keener te see uncommon things than ony. Syne aw takes a daunder through the shanties,—” with a contemptuous sweep of the hand in the direction of the village,—“do aw no see the belongings of the gaun-aboot bodies? Aw could tell ye o’ the bagman’s pack—Whist! Aw ’ll ask ye—aw say

te ye, come te Beg Islan' te the hoose o' the Moglashens. There ye'r belongin's an' ye'r peentin' 'll be safe fro' the deev'l-ish fingers; aw 'm sayin' that ye 'll be better off, d' ye see? aw 'm a-givin' ye a sicht o' ma mind—o' ma thochts. Aw 'm givin' ye warnin'."

"Do you mean to say that the people here will rob me?" I said.

"Aw mean te say that—" He broke off suddenly and pointed to the horizon, where Beg Island loomed up dark gray, a pyramid against the windy sky—"Aw mean te say that ye 'll be made welcome there for a twal'month, if ye like te stop."

I began to be interested; there might be something in all this rigmarole, perhaps more than the fellow said. My picture was almost completed; it would be good to leave it for a

while. The inn where I was stopping was by no means comfortable, hardly tolerable, and my room, being on the ground floor, was rather damp. No



other was to be had; the upper rooms leaked from the roof, they said. Why not go over with this eager Gaelic gentleman of the open-handed hospital-

ity? Surely I could be no worse off there than here in my present quarters.

“I ’ll tell you what I ’ll do,” I said, when we were nearly at the inn; “I ’ll toss up a cent. Heads I stay here, tails I go with you to-night over to Beg Island.”

“Tails it is, an’ at the first cast of the bawbee,” said the Moglashen, gleefully, as he touched the coin. “An’ ye

promised," seeing my glance at the gathering clouds.

Then he ran ahead, calling out that he would get the boat ready and carry down my traps and luggage.

I saw I was in for it now; there was no turning back—I was to be the guest of the Moglashens on Beg Island. There



was some difficulty in explaining to the wondering inn people, but at length matters were settled, and I left word that any mail that arrived for me was to be sent over in a special boat.

In two hours we were off Beg Island, which loomed up before us vast and brown through

a transparent mist of flying spray. The sea was rough, and before Ingonish was a mile away I had repented of my hasty decision. Soon I heard an exclamation from Moglashen, of whom I began to weary.

“There,” he said, pointing to a white speck on the side of the hill, “there’s Moglashen’s. They’ll be seein’ us the noo. Jeannie’ll be in the toor,—Jeannie’ll be the eldest, d’ye ken? Then the’ll be Patty; then the’ll be Matty; then the’ll be Tessie; then the’ll be—”

“What!” I said, “all girls?”

“Aye. The’ll be Lizzie; then the’ll be Laurie—sax o’ them, an’ a’ the most enticin’ sort, d’ye ken? But ye’ll see for yoursel’. Aw mon say, though, that Jeannie’ll be the leddy,” he exclaimed in an emphatic tone.

Here was an adventure, sure enough! I was to live in a

family of seven women, and I had evidently been brought here with the idea that I might fall a victim to one of the six of "the most enticin' sort."

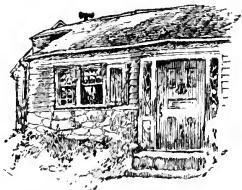
The thought was so absurd that I laughed aloud, and this seemed to remove some lingering doubts in the mind of Moglashen, who had been eying me, for he exclaimed, with a great show of glee, "Aye," slapping his hand upon his knee, and rubbing it softly up and down. "Ye'll be that happy — I'll answer for 't, what wi' pianny playin' sax month on end, an' ye'll no hae felt the time."

"What!" said I, in surprise, "have you a piano here?"

"'Deed an' we hae. Wass a brig come ashoor—salvage, d' ye mind? Wull Taggart would hae it that 't was his, but" — with a chuckle — "aw would na. Mon," he added,

after an interval of silence, during which we rapidly approached the island, “when ye hear the skirl o’ Jeannie’s voice, and the manful pluckin’ o’ the pianny, ye ’ll no regret yer up-tassin’ o’ the bawbee.”

In due time we reached the landing-place between two immense rocks, from which a path flanked by two spars—probably the remnant of the ill-fated brig—led up to the house, a



long patchwork structure of stone, the lower part of which was whitewashed. It looked comfortable enough in the low western light.

Moglashen, who was busying himself with the boat, which he had hauled up on a sort of miniature ship-railway by means of a windlass, called out to me to follow the path up to the house, and he would "be joinin' me presently."

Somewhat to my surprise, the door remained closed, nor did I see a sign of the "invitin' sort" who, according to Moglashen, were to make me so welcome to Beg Island.

I knocked loudly at the door, once, a half-dozen times, to no purpose, then boldly turned the knob and entered. A fire was burning in a wide fireplace,—a fire of sea-wood from which tiny flames of green and blue flickered in a most delightful manner,—and a simmering kettle filled the room with harmonious sounds. The floor was covered with mats of home manufacture, archaic in design

and of various shapes. On the table by the window was a ball of yarn in which the needles were sticking, the half-



finished stocking depending from it half-way to the floor, as if it had been hurriedly dropped, and beside the ball was a pair of silver-bowed spectacles. The room was a homely one altogether, and I threw off my great-coat and high boots, seating myself in the arm-chair before the fire to dry my wet feet. The sea had been rough, and some water came over the bow in spite of Moglashen's skill.

While I was musing upon the

absurdity of coming over to Beg Island, and almost dozing in the grateful warmth from the seawood fire, I heard voices in dispute, then the falsetto of Moglashen mingled with feminine exclamations. They seemed to come from the next room ; a door slammed noisily, and then a woman's voice said distinctly : " She 'll no be able te stay here, an' that 's a fact, aw can tell ye, ye daunderin' aul' ejiot. Whaur in the name o' the prauphet 'll she sleep ? When well ye ken that we 're aye sleepin' twa in a bed the noo ? " Decidedly this was a welcome.

Just then the door opened and Moglashen entered, saying with an uncouth attempt at light-heartedness that seemed absolutely ridiculous after what I had heard behind the closed door :

" An' aw hope ye 'll be enjoyin' yersel', ma freend, whiles

the supper's preparin'; an' after the supper we'll aye hae a bit thump at the pianny. An' noo—" he tiptoed over to a cupboard, from which he brought forth a squatty, promising-looking jug and a cup, and set them before me—"an' noo we'll just hae a wee bit drap te warm the cockles."

We were in the act of drinking each other's health when a female voice from the other room called out, "Will—yum!"

Moglashen almost dropped the cup from his hand, and, setting it down on the table, said in an awestruck tone:

"An' aw'll just hae te leave ye whiles I answer t' wife."

He closed the door after him. I seemed to hear a scuffle and smothered exclamations; then a door slammed and silence fell. While I was speculating over these happenings Moglashen returned, bearing a lamp, for it

had grown quite dark by this time. He still kept up the uncouth semblance of cheerful hospitality while laying the table, putting the tea to draw on the hob, and slicing a savory-looking ham, and then sat down beside me, his eyes fixed on the fire, his hands nervously rubbing his knees.



Determined to know what the trouble was, or rather to corroborate the surmise I had formed, I asked for his wife and daughters. Were we not to have their company at supper?

“’Deed, then, aw ’ll tell ye the hale lot o’ them ’s doon sick.” He paused to note what effect this might have upon me, running his hand through the fiery red beard.

“Sick!” I exclaimed, “and

you brought me here, knowing this ? ”

“Weel, ye canna be angered when aw tell ye aw deed n’t ken they were as sick as a’ that—eh, but they ’re sare sick the noo,” he exclaimed dismally, staring into the blaze, and rubbing his knees and thighs.

“But what ails them, man? Is it anything serious? Can I do anything to help—”

“Nae; ye jist canna, an’ that ’s a’ aboot it, mon alive,” he exclaimed, rising in a kind of desperation, and seizing the teapot. “Ye ’ll just take a bit supper an’ then—” A noise at the door and the voice calling, “Will—yum!” and Moglashen once more disappeared. When he returned we ate our supper almost in silence, and without further interruption; after which he cleared the table, handed out clay pipes and a box of leaf tobacco, and set a kettle of fresh

water on to boil ; then with a sigh, seating himself once more beside me before the fire, he delivered himself as follows :

“ A mon may be hospeetable, an’ yet hae no t’ abeelity t’ carry ’t oot, d’ ye see ? Well, then, here ye hae a mon, as aw said, that ’s aye hospeetable, an’ a’ thing ’s ag’in’ her. She ’ll be wantin’ for company o’ the male kind, an’ she ’ll no be let hae it in peace, d’ ye see ? Well, then, aw ’ll go a bit farther.

“ Here ye hae a mon, as aw say, hospeetable, an’ she finds an uncommon chance te hae a bit gossip aboot the grand great ceeties wi’ a chap fresh frae it a’. Well, then, she takes a daunder ower the bit rocks, an’ presents thae hospeetality te thae chap. Syne thae chap agrees,” he continued miserably, “ an’ thae ward ’s gi’en.” He paused, and, rubbing his

whiskers meditatively, began again: "Here ye hae a mon wi'oot t' abeelity te carry 't oot, an' aw 'm sayin' she 's aye an ill-gitted mon that 's aye wi'oot a ward in her ain hoose; aw 'm sayin' here ye hae a mon wi'oot a ward in her ain hoose, d' ye see?" he asked, anxiously seeking my eye.

"I see," I said reassuringly. Indeed I could not help seeing it all. In his own language, here we had a man who had a large element of hospitality in his nature, which he was forced to keep in abeyance in consequence of a difference of opinion on the part of his better half, and, for aught I knew, on the part of the "enticers" as well.

In his desire for companionship he had invited me to come to Beg Island and to stop with him for an indefinite period, all without consulting the wishes of his good lady, thereby get-

ting himself into a difficulty from which he could see no means of escape.

“ Well, what is to be done ? ” I said. “ I cannot go out into the storm, and there ’s no other house within reach, or—”

“ Aw beg ye, don’t, don’t say anither ward about gangin’ oot,” he said piteously, wringing his hands. “ Aw ’m—”

“ Will—yum ! ” And he again disappeared.

I composed myself as well as I could in the huge chair before the fireplace; the wind howled dismally around the eaves, and I could hear the waves dashing against the rocks below. I struggled against the desire to sleep ; I was conscious that Moglashen came in at intervals, that he replenished the fire, that he



piled coats and blankets about me. . . .

I awoke at daybreak, and soon after Moglashen came in, threw some chips and a log on the fire, and began preparations for breakfast. We talked without saying anything, strictly avoiding any reference to the ladies or referring in any way to the Moglashen hospitality. He was garrulous, yet in a subdued manner, constantly glancing at me out of the corner of his eye. He made no resistance to my demand to be taken over to Ingonish immediately after breakfast. I gave him to understand that I believed the "pianny" to be a myth, and—well, there might be six beauteous creatures, but I was not prepared to believe in them.

Utterly cowed, and as different as possible from the canny Moglashen of yesterday, was

the creature Moglashen of to-day; his hair and beard no longer stood boldly out from his face, but were brushed back smoothly, evidently by feminine hands.

He led the way down the path to the boat, shoved her down the ways, stepped the mast, shook out the sail to the fresh morning breeze, and thus we left Beg Island and the long, low whitewashed house of the Moglashens shining in the morning sun.



When we were about a mile away I fancied I saw fluttering dresses against the green of the hillside; but this was the only glimpse I had of the ladies Moglashen.

Every week since my return to town a bundle of New York

papers goes to Beg Island addressed to William Moglashen, but I have neither heard from him nor seen him since I left him that July morning standing abject and humiliated in his boat under the wharf at Ingonish.

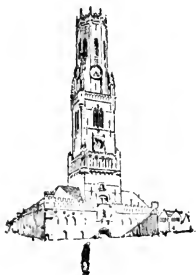


THE CLAVECIN,
BRUGES



THE CLAVECIN, BRUGES

A SILENT, grass-grown market-place, upon the uneven stones of which the sabots of a passing black-cloaked peasant



clatter loudly. A group of sleepy-looking soldiers in red trousers lolling about the wide

portal of the Belfry, which rears
aloft against the pearly sky

All the height it has
Of ancient stone.

As the chime ceases there
lingers for a space a faint mu-
sical hum in the air ; the stones
seem to carry and retain the
melody ; one is loath to move
for fear of losing some part of
the harmony.

I feel an indescribable im-
pulse to climb the four hundred



odd steps ; incomprehensible,
for I detest steeple-climbing,
and have no patience with
steeple-climbers.

Before I realize it, I am at the stairs. "Hold, sir!" from behind me. "It is forbidden."



In wretched French a weazen-faced little soldier explains that repairs are about to be made in the tower, in consequence of which visitors are forbidden. A franc removes this military obstacle, and I press on.

At the top of the stairs is an old Flemish woman shelling peas, while over her shoulder peeps a tame magpie. A savory

odor of stewing vegetables fills the air.

"What do you wish, sir?" Many shrugs, gesticulations, and sighs of objurgation, which are covered by a shining new five-franc piece, and she produces a bunch of keys. As the door closes upon me the magpie gives a hoarse, gleeful squawk.

. . . A huge, dim room with a vaulted ceiling. Against the wall lean ancient stone statues,



noseless and disfigured, crowned and sceptered effigies of forgotten lords and ladies of Flan-

ders. High up on the wall two slitted Gothic windows, through which the violet light of day is streaming. I hear the gentle coo of pigeons. To the right a low door, some vanishing steps of stone, and a hanging hand-rope. Before I have taken a dozen steps upward I am lost in the darkness; the steps are worn hollow and sloping, the rope is slippery — seems to have been waxed, so smooth has it become by handling. Four hundred steps and over; I have lost track of the number, and stumble giddily upward round and round the slender stone shaft. I am conscious of low openings from time to time — openings to what? I do not know. A damp smell exhales from them, and the air is cold upon my face as I pass them. At last a dim light above. With the next turn a blinding glare of light, a moment's blankness,

then a vast panorama gradually dawns upon me. Through the frame of stonework is a vast

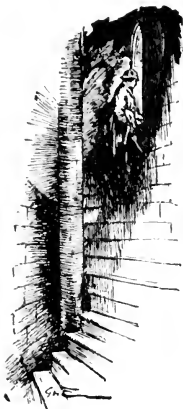


reach of grayish green bounded by the horizon, an immense shield embossed with silvery lines of waterways, and studded with clustering red-tiled roofs. A rim of pale yellow appears,—the sand-dunes that line the coast,—and dimly beyond a grayish film, evanescent, flashing—the North Sea.

Something flies through the slit from which I am gazing, and, following its flight upward, I see a long beam crossing the gallery, whereon are perched

an array of jackdaws gazing down upon me in wonder.

I am conscious of a rhythmic movement about me that stirs the air, a mysterious, beating,



throbbing sound, the machinery of the clock, which some one has described as a "heart of iron beating in a breast of stone."

I lean idly in the narrow slit, gazing at the softened landscape, the exquisite harmony of the greens, grays, and browns, the lazily turning arms of far-off mills, reminders of Cuyp, Van der Velde, Teniers, shadowy, mysterious recollections. I am conscious of uttering aloud some commonplaces of delight. A slight and sudden movement behind me, a smothered cough. A little old man in a black velvet coat stands looking up at me, twisting and untwisting his hands. There are ruffles at his throat and wrists, and an amused smile spreads over his face, which is cleanly shaven, of the color of wax, with a tiny network of red lines over the cheek-bones, as if the blood had been forced there by some excess of passion and had remained. He has heard my sentimental ejaculation. I am conscious of the

absurdity of the situation, and move aside for him to pass. He makes a courteous gesture with one ruffled hand.

There comes a prodigious rattling and grinding noise from above, then a jangle of bells, some half-dozen notes in all. At the first stroke the old man closes his eyes, throws back his head, and follows the rhythm with his long, white hands, as though playing a piano. The sound dies away; the place becomes painfully silent; still the regular motion of the old man's hands continues. A creepy, shivery feeling runs up and down my spine, a fear of which I am ashamed seizes upon me.

"Fine pells, sare," says the little old man, suddenly dropping his hands, and fixing his eyes upon me. "You sall not hear such pells in your countree. But stay not here; come wis me,

and I will show you the clavecin. You sall not see the clavecin yet? No?"

I had not, of course, and thanked him.

"You sall see Melchior, Melchior t'e Groote, t'e magnif'."

As he spoke we entered a room quite filled with curious machinery, a medley of levers, wires, and rope above, below two large cylinders studded with shining brass points.

He sprang among the wires with a spidery sort of agility, caught one, pulled and hung upon it with all his weight. There came a r-r-r-r-r of fans and wheels, followed by a shower of dust; slowly one great cylinder began to revolve; wires and ropes reaching into the gloom above began to



twitch convulsively ; faintly came the jangle of far-off bells. Then came a pause, then a deafening *boom* that well nigh stunned me. As the waves of sound came and went, the little old man twisted and untwisted



his hands in delight, and ejaculated, "Melchior you haf heeard, Melchior t'e Groote — t'e bourdon."

I wanted to examine the machinery, but he impatiently seized my arm and almost

dragged me away, saying, "I will skow you—I will skow you. Come wis me."

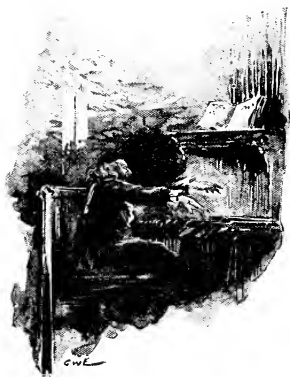
From a pocket he produced a long brass key, and unlocked a door covered with red leather, disclosing an up-leading flight of steps, to which he pushed me. It gave upon an octagon-shaped room with a curious floor of sheet-lead. Around the wall ran a seat under the diamond-paned Gothic windows. From their shape I knew them to be the highest in the tower. I had seen them from the square below many times, with the framework above upon which hung row upon row of bells.

In the middle of the room was a rude sort of keyboard, with pedals below, like those of a large organ. Fronting this construction sat a long, high-backed bench. On the rack over the keyboard rested some

sheets of music, which, upon examination, I found to be of parchment and written by hand. The notes were curious in shape, consisting of squares of black and diamonds of red upon the lines. Across the top of the page was written, in a straggling hand, "Van den Gheyn, Nikolaas." I turned to the little old man with the ruffles. "Van den Gheyn!" I said in surprise, pointing to the parchment. "Why, that is the name of the most celebrated of *carillonneurs*, Van den Gheyn of Louvain." He untwisted his hands and bowed. "Eet ees ma name, mynheer; I am the *carillonneur*."

I fancied that my face showed all too plainly the incredulity I felt, for his darkened, and he muttered, "You not belief, Engelsch? Ah, I skow you; then you belief, parehap," and with astounding agility seated

himself upon the bench before the clavecin, turned up the ruffles at his wrists, and literally threw himself upon the keys.



A sound of thunder, accompanied by a vivid flash of lightning, filled the air, even as the first notes of the bells reached my ears. Involuntarily I glanced out of the diamond-leaded window: dark clouds

were all about us, the house-tops and surrounding country were no longer to be seen. A blinding flash of lightning seemed to fill the room; the arms and legs of the little old man sought the keys and pedals with inconceivable rapidity; the music crashed about us with a deafening din, to the accompaniment of the thunder, which seemed to sound in unison with the boom of the bourdon. It was grandly terrible. The face of the little old man was turned upon me, but his eyes were closed. He seemed to find the pedals intuitively, and at every peal of thunder, which shook the tower to its foundations, he would open his mouth, a toothless cavern, and shout aloud. I could not hear the sounds for the crashing of the bells. Finally, with a last deafening crash of iron rods and thunderbolts, the noise of the

bells gradually died away. Instinctively I had glanced above when the crash came, half expecting to see the roof torn off.

“I think we had better go down,” I said. “This tower has been struck by lightning several times, and I imagine that discretion—”

I don't know what more I said, for my eyes rested upon the empty bench, and the bare rack where the music had been. The clavecin was one mass of twisted iron rods, tangled wires, and decayed, worm-eaten woodwork; the little old man had disappeared. I rushed to the red leather-covered door; it was fast. I shook it in a veritable terror; it would not yield. With a bound I reached the ruined clavecin, seized one of the pedals, and tore it away from the machine. The end was armed with an iron point.

This I inserted between the lock and the door. I twisted the lock from the worm-eaten wood with one turn of the wrist, the door opened, and I almost fell down the steep steps. The second door at the bottom was also closed. I threw my weight against it once, twice; it gave, and I half slipped, half ran down the winding steps in the darkness.

Out at last into the fresh air of the lower passage. At the noise I made in closing the ponderous door came forth the old custode.

In my excitement I seized her by the arm, saying, "Who was the little old man in the black velvet coat with the ruffles? Where is he?"

She looked at me in a stupid manner. "Who is he," I repeated—"the little old man who played the clavecin?"

“ Little old man, sir ? I don’t know,” said the crone. “ There has been no one in the tower to-day but yourself.”



THE COFFEE-HOUSE,
MAARKEN



THE COFFEE-HOUSE, MAARKEN

AT nine o'clock the coffee-house is full. It is a long, low room, well smoked as to ceil-



ing and walls, and well sanded as to floor; and although it is the official meeting-place of the

town, where the burgomaster and the principal men of the locality congregate, it can hold them all, and still give bench-room to the chance stranger.

A high-backed oaken bench, well polished by use, follows the wall on three sides, leaving space for the high white-tiled fireplace. The fourth is occupied by a leaden-faced bar, or counter, well garnished with the tall delft jars in blue and white with shining brass tops, wherein is contained the material for the goodly array of clay pipes in the racks overhead. Small, round tables are set before the bench, leaving the center of the room free. The bench itself is well occupied by a line of stolid, substantial-looking, ruminating Hollanders smoking furiously, the gray wreaths of pungent vapor slowly curling upward about the hanging models of

vessels, high as to poop and rounded as to bow — models of the time of Van der Decken.

Only occasionally does a mynheer remove his pipe to let fall a sentence epigrammatic in its terseness. Your North Hollander speaks slowly, and is economical with his words. He neither looks for nor attempts smartness of repartee ; does not smile easily ; and rarely tells a story, because all the stories are known and worn threadbare by repetition, and he is shy of new ones. If one listens to the talk one finds that it is of the sea. Everything in Maarken belongs to the sea.



How can one be interested in crops that are grown in tubs ; in farms that number feet in-

stead of acres ; in land brought from Amsterdam at that, for Maarken is all sand ? Then, again, when one goes abroad in Maarken, one must either walk *over* the water on bridges or sail *upon* it in a boat, and even the housetops are ornamented with bellying nets hung up to dry, and with long masts from



which Juvrowe flies a signal of welcome to Hendrik or Nikolaas on his way home in his blunt-bowed, lee-boarded *tjalk*. It is in the coffee-house that your talker, your romancer, is discouraged. He is quickly made to understand by means well known to the phlegmatic frequenters that they will have none of him ; that he must either observe the proprieties

well established there, or go away at once.

In the coffee-house whist is much in vogue—an excellent method of disguising the poverty of conversation, or of excusing the lack of it. So happily constituted are the players,



that with the exception of an occasional grunt of pleasure or dismay, as it so happens, when a card is laid down, and the continuous puffing of pipes manufacturing fragrant fog, the silence is well nigh unbroken for, I was about to say, hours at a time.

This evening the current was interrupted — excitement reigned; that is to say, as much excitement as could be permitted within the hallowed precincts of the coffee-house. A stranger was present. Enough would it have been had the stranger been a countryman from Sneek, or even from Monnikendam; but lo! this was no common, every-day stranger, actually sitting in the corner by the tile-garnished fireplace, drinking his thin beer and smoking a new clay pipe as stolidly as if he had occupied the spot for a score of years. This bearing of his conferred a dignity upon him in the eyes of the mynheers that they could not conceal. Whist languished, pipes went out and needed relighting, a necessity in itself marvelous and hitherto unheard of. Whispers were heard from the burgomaster's corner.

The mynheers slid along the polished bench until they were all in a knot, with their heads together about the burgomaster's.

The whispers became louder; horny palms smote one another; an unheeded pipe fell to the floor, and broke in pieces with a metallic click. The group parted and it was evident that a crisis had arrived. The burgomaster drew apart in a dignified manner, and approached the stranger. The others also slid their persons along the polished settle in his direction. The burgomaster bowed, ejaculated, "Dag, mynheer," seized the poker, and made shift to stir the lumps of glowing charcoal in the brass box on the hearth.

It was like a scene from a comic opera, with the line of fascinated mynheers in very small skull-caps perched upon their shock heads, bright neckerchiefs fastened with huge gold

buttons, coats abbreviated as to tails and tight in the waist, and breeches of indescribable width. There was, however, a trifle more of dignity in the dress of the burgomaster. His was a long-tailed coat of clerical cut,



a wide-brimmed felt hat, knee-breeches, and leggings. Still stirring the coals, he seated himself beside the stranger, and looked him critically over from the corner of his eye. The inspection seemed to be satisfactory, for he offered his tobacco-

box with a ceremonious bow. The stranger accepted, and bowed in return, and the salutation was repeated by the mynheers on the slippery bench; which formality being at an end, the burgomaster, filling his pipe, ejaculated:

“Van Amerikaa?”

“Van Amerikaa,” avowed the stranger.

“Van Amerikaa,” triumphantly sounded in chorus the mynheers on the bench. There was a long pause, during which heavy volumes of smoke arose.

“Nord Amerikaa?” asked the burgomaster in a doubtful tone.

“Nord Amerikaa,” responded the stranger.

“Nord Amerikaa,” sounded the chorus of mynheers, nodding to one another in great enjoyment of the perspicacity of the burgomaster. Another long interval followed, during which

the mynheers allowed the fact to percolate through their gray matter.

“ New York ? ” suddenly called out, in a burst of genius, a fat fellow with an absurdly thin neck and an emaciated head, who sat at the farthest end of the bench.

The stranger's answer to this brilliant inquiry was breathlessly awaited. Finally, when he had succeeded in lighting his pipe, he nodded. With a sigh of relief the mynheers gravely repeated the nod to one another, and all settled back on the bench.

Here the burgomaster began to shuffle his feet and to blink his eyes. He was evidently formulating an interrogation, but before he could get it in form, from the emaciated head on the end of the bench came in jerks : “ New York has got a Brasident — Gleveland, heh ?

Shoo-fly! I spik Engelsch!" Much to the disappointment of the mynheers, who evidently regarded the speaker as a scholar of the first magnitude,



the stranger did not vouchsafe any reply to this piece of information, but drained his beer-mug to the last drop, and set it upon the table *with the lid up*.



There is an old and honored custom in Holland which provides that whenever one leaves his mug with the lid up in a public place it is in form for all within reach to deposit their mugs upon his table, and he is forced to pay for their refilling. Such an occasion had not happened in Maarken within the memory of the oldest mynheer in the town, and almost before the American's mug had touched the table the eager mynheers were upon their feet, headed by the dignified burgomaster, mug in hand.

The stranger, when the situation was explained to him, with excited gestures by the landlord, in which the chorus joined, paid for his error in good grace, and once



more quietness reigned. With his mug in hand and his eyes fixed upon the glowing charcoal in the brass box, the American began in tolerable Dutch,



as if talking to himself: "In New York one sees railroads built in the air, and cars crowded with people rushing over them. In New York buildings thirteen

stories high are seen, and stairs are seldom used. People are whisked up to their rooms in cars run by steam. In New York cars are run upon the streets not by horses or steam, but by lightning, and all the lamps in the city are lighted at once by one man, who uses no fire or matches, but simply sits in his chair and turns a screw. In New York there is a bridge so high that the masts of tall vessels may pass under it without touching. It is hung upon wires, and railroad-trains pass over it all day and night. In New York —" The burgomaster paused spellbound in the act of drinking, and slowly set down his mug *with the lid up*. The stranger's eye caught the error, and he banged his mug on the table beside the burgomaster's. The mynheers rose to their feet in an ecstasy of astonishment, indignation,

and dismay; and before the stranger's mug had been filled and replaced upon the table, the coffee-house was empty, save for the presence of the American and the awestruck landlord.



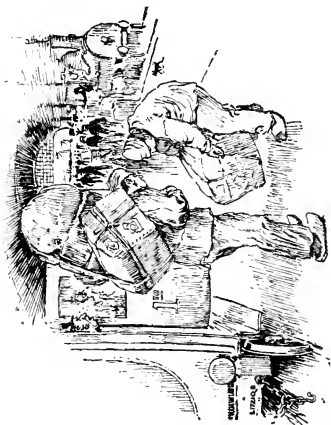
“STRANGE TO SAY”



“STRANGE TO SAY”

A VAST network of iron rods and girders overhead ; long spirals of white steam rising through the gray smoke from a score of locomotives panting and puffing as if impatient to be gone ; avenues of railway-carriages in yellow, brown, and black ; hurrying, pushing multitudes jostling one another ; tired-looking travelers at the end of their journeys ; hopeful-looking travelers braving the possibilities of the unknown ; luggage-porters, in caps of flaming red and blouses of blue, staggering under Brobdingnagian loads ; parting messages drowned in the babel of sounds ; shrill, warning whistles of departing trains ; the clanking of

iron wheels on the turn-tables; then, suddenly, as if by magic, the multitude has vanished. Guards run along the lines of carriages, slamming doors and turning the brass keys. The



door of one second-class carriage at the end of the line is open. Into this I pitch my rug

and valise, and scramble in after them ; the guard slams the door, screams out a hoarse word, and the long train glides out of the Rhijn Spoorweg



Station at Rotterdam on its way to Paris.

A person who was curled up in the corner let his feet down upon the floor and helped me to stow my valise in the racks,

and, when this preliminary was settled, produced a cigar-case, and inquired in tolerable English if I affected tobacco. We exchanged cigars. His was excellent, while the one from my case was an ordinary three-center that I had purchased in Amsterdam. Still, he did not complain. I could see in the



dim light of the winter evening that he was short. He could hardly have been five feet in height, but the feature that most impressed itself upon me was his head, which was entirely

out of proportion to his body, and surmounted by a fanciful traveling-cap.

Between the puffs of his cigar, which he consumed furiously, he informed me that he had been in America, in New-York, several years before ; indeed, he was a great traveler, I fancy, for he had some sort of yarn of half a dozen countries to relate, in his queer English, which was broken with as fully queer French and Italian. He longed for "gompany," he said, and was delighted that we were to be traveling companions. While he was rather inquisitive, there was nothing in his questions at which one could take offense ; indeed, he was quite as amusing as voluble, and all I had to do was to listen quietly, with an occasional "Yes" or "No" for politeness' sake. Soon, however, his mood changed, and as we were cross-

ing the trestle over the Hollands-Diep he began a sort of sermon upon life, delivered, it seemed to me, in order to show his familiarity with the English tongue, and apropos of nothing. "As t'e eye of t'e morninck to t'e larg, as t'e honey to t'e pee, or as garrion to t'e fulture, efen such iss life undo t'e heart of mangind." This was profound, but ere long it became also tiresome, as I endeavored to show him politely, by extracting a yellow-covered Tauchnitz of one of Bret Harte's latest stories from my shawl-strap, and burying myself therein — quite a transparent subterfuge, for it had become entirely too dark to read. He had curled his legs under him, and I fancied and hoped that he might be preparing to go to sleep. He made me nervous with his drone, and with his immense head with the ridiculous cap perched upon it.

It seemed as if I could not keep my eyes away from him. We were slowing up at a small station, and finally, with a grinding of the brakes, stopped altogether. There came a pounding noise of feet on the roof of the carriage, a crash, and then a lamp was thrust into its socket overhead, and the footsteps passed on.

My companion looked positively hideous in the dim yellow light of the lamp overhead, which feebly illuminated the carriage. Where I knew his eyes to be were two huge, black patches, from which now and again came a flash, and his cheek-bones stood out with ghastly prominence. As the train gathered momentum his singsong voice rang above the noise of the swiftly moving wheels. "Gomplain nod with the fool off t'e shordness off dy time. Rememper—" Con-

found the man! Was I to be annoyed with this sort of thing all the way to Brussels? "Vishest dou to haf an obbor-tunity off more wices—" I



turned in the seat, and resting my head against the cushioned side, pretended to close my eyes as if to sleep. Of no avail. Still the hissing s's rang upon my senses with maddening reit-

eration. I fancy that in spite of my nervousness I must have dropped off to sleep for an instant, for a touch awoke me, and starting to my feet, I found that my companion had moved to the seat exactly opposite my own, and with his hand upon my knee,—a large, bony hand it was, with enlarged joints, and nails bitten to the quick,—had thrust his face forward until it was not more than six inches from my own. He was still chanting his infernal proverbs: “Not life a telusion, a zeries off mizatventures, a bursuit off ewils linked togedder on all sides—” I thrust him away from me with an exclamation of disgust. “In heaven’s name, man, what ails you? I wish you would oblige me by stopping your infernal gabble!”

“Softly, friend,” he said, leaning back against the cushions. “You are a younk man, and I

am an alt man. I haf seen moch off t'e vorld. T'e t'oughtless man pridleth not his tongue; he speaketh at random; and is gaught in the voolishness off his own vords."

"What do I care what you have seen!" I exclaimed petulantly, now thoroughly exasperated. "Have the goodness to keep to your own end of the carriage, and I will keep to mine."

In a moment I was sorry I had spoken so harshly to the man, and the more I sought to justify my words, the more inexcusable did they become. He had really done nothing at which I could take offense. The garrulousness of age, and the very natural desire to exercise his knowledge of the English language—I began to cast about in my mind for some means with which to soften and undo in a measure that

which I now considered my extreme irritability ; but, at the same time, I had no desire to stimulate the now happily pent-up flood of proverbs to renewed activity. I gave a sidelong glance toward the corner to which he had retired, and where he sat with his legs drawn up under him, motionless save for a certain nervous activity of his two thumbs, which revolved one over the other. I could not tell whether he was watching me, for his eyes were invisible in the deep shadows made by his overhanging eyebrows. Upon second thought I determined to let well enough alone, and, lighting my little pocket-lantern, hung it to the hook at my shoulder, and attempted to read ; but I was unable to fix my mind upon the story. Over



the left-hand corner of the book I held, those long, bony, large-jointed thumbs tirelessly, incessantly revolved. Hold the book as I might, I could not drive the impression from my mind. I was forced to count the revolutions of those dreadful thumbs. My mind was fully made up to seek another compartment at the first stop we made. Still the thumbs turned and twisted, their size exaggerated in the light from above. I fell to counting their revolutions, almost unconsciously at first. He seemed to have a system—nine times outward toward me, ten times inward toward himself. Again and again I counted—always the same, with a maddening regularity. On we sped through the night. It was raining now, and huge drops chased one another down the window-pane. The “rackety-tack” of the

wheels, the easy swaying of the carriage to the left and then to the right, and the turn and twist of those immense thumbs—I closed the book in despair, and was in the act of thrusting it into the shawl-strap, when with



the rapidity of a thunderclap there came a grinding crash, and the carriage left the track and, after bumping along over the sleepers, fell upon its side. My companion was thrown

upon me. He grasped me with his long arms, and wound his legs about my body. We were shaken about like pills in a box. There was an interval of silence, then the hissing of escaping steam, and shrill screams, all of which I heard in my struggles to escape from the octopus-like grasp of my companion. At length I succeeded in breaking away, and with a strength incredible and incomprehensible to me now, I forced the door above my head (for the carriage was lying upon its side) just as a number of men came up with lanterns. We soon had the little Frenchman, or whatever he was, out of the wreck, which was not a very bad one, only two carriages having left the track in consequence of a spreading rail. He was quite insensible, but when we got him to the flagman's hut, some distance

down the track, he came to himself, and we speedily discovered that he was only a bit shaken up. However, to my extreme embarrassment, he threw himself upon his knees at my feet, hailed me as his deliverer, and called me by many other highfalutin names. His gratitude was boundless, and in vain did I explain to him with all the emphasis at my command that I had done nothing to earn it. He would hear nothing of the sort, waved away my explanations as "motesty," "prafe motesty," and, to my dismay, insisted upon embracing me at intervals.

I will not dwell upon the uncomfortable details of the rest of the journey to Paris. Suffice it, that I was unable to escape from my *bête noire* until I reached the Gare du Nord, where I succeeded in eluding

him, it is true, but only for seven sweet days, after which blessed period he found me, and, embracing me in a paroxysm of joy, took up his lodging in the building where I had my apartment and studio—a



huge, rambling brick building in a quarter somewhat frequented by painters. Then followed a period upon which I look back with a shudder; days when I kept my studio door (which at intervals resounded with that hated, timid

knock) locked and barred even to my best friends, fearing the entrance of my grateful *bête noire*. I remember the unreasonable shudder of disgust I felt one night when I had gained the court in fancied security, only to meet him coming in the opposite direction, feel the grasp of that horrible hand upon my arm, and hear the hissing s's in my ear. I could not work; it was out of the question. My picture, which I had intended for the Salon, was barely begun. My *bête noire* showered delicacies upon me. The concierge, for example, who did my cooking, would bring me game out of season when I expected a chop, until at last I forbade him to receive the things from "la



tête énorme," as he styled him. I fancy the villain lived well in the interval.

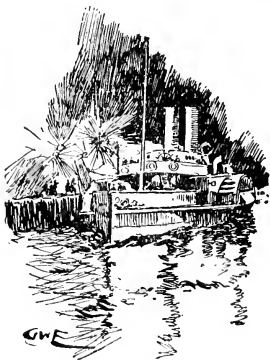


Each morning expensive cut flowers were left at my door by the florist, who refused to carry them away, saying that he had been ordered to leave them, and had no further knowledge in the matter. So there they stayed in the hallway, heaped up against the wall as if for a tomb

in Père La Chaise, until swept away by the concierge, with semi-pious ejaculations. Can you imagine my position, then, with such unmerited gratitude thrust upon me? Finally I determined to end it all, and wrote to London, asking a friend to look me up quarters, as I would leave Paris at once. Carefully, but with a great show of carelessness, I let the concierge understand that I would attend the opera that evening, in order to cover my outgoing. I intended to take the night train for Boulogne, thence go by boat to Folkestone.

Finally we arrived at Boulogne. The night was a stormy one. Overhead the moon struggled with ragged clouds. It had been raining, for the pavement was wet, and the long lines of yellow gas-lamps were reflected prettily. There was a rush of the passengers toward the boat,

which lay rocking and plunging at the jetty, and when we reached the gang-plank the mail-bags were already being taken aboard, and a huge derrick was



creaking and groaning as the deck-hands hoisted some heavy cases over the side. I hugged myself with delight, thinking that I had escaped from my admirer.

For an instant I fancied I

saw the pallid face and shrunken figure of the little old man among the crowd already gathered upon the deck, and I sickened at the thought that my long and tiresome night journey had been endured for naught. Determined to know the worst, I jumped down from the plank to the deck where the face had appeared in the glare of the electric light, only to see it vanish over the companion-ladder leading below to the freight deck. I could not be sure that it was my *bête noire*, but I was bound to follow the figure and to satisfy my fears. Groping my way among the piled-up luggage and boxes, I reached a clear space only to feel strong hands grasping me from behind. I heard a scuffle, the arms were wrenched from about my neck, and, turning, I saw the little old man being forced up the gang-plank to the

pier by two muscular-looking fellows. Before I could well collect my senses, the bell clanged noisily, the gang-plank was drawn up, and with increasing speed we left the jetty. I could make out a number of people seemingly struggling with some one under the



brightly gleaming electric lights, and I fancied I heard a scream; but in less time than it takes to read this we had passed beyond

the end of the jetty, with its final red and green lights, and were on our way across the Channel. In looking over the papers at breakfast one morning several days after my arrival in London, I came upon the following :

LUCKY CAPTURE

On Wednesday night last, as the express-boat from Boulogne for Folkestone was about to leave the jetty, a person of singular aspect was observed by the officers acting in a manner fitted to arouse suspicion. He was seen to scrutinize the faces of the passengers, and finally to follow a gentleman on board the steamer, where he secreted himself in a dark passageway, from which he leaped upon the back of the unsuspecting traveler and attempted to strangle him. Doubtless he would have succeeded in his murderous purpose, but for the vigilance of the "sergeant de ville," who promptly called assistance, and after a severe struggle with the assassin, who seemed to be possessed of herculean strength, succeeded in placing the nippers upon him. Taken before the police, he was unable to give an account of himself,

and acted in a very violent manner. It is thought that the author of many mysterious crimes has at length been secured.

LATER.—The individual captured on the Boulogne boat on Wednesday proves to be a certain exalted personage of unsound mind who made his escape from a private “maison de santé” at The Hague. The sergent de ville has been handsomely rewarded for making the capture of the unfortunate, who, in company with four keepers, left for The Hague this morning.



A FÊTE DAY AND
EVENING IN A DUTCH
TOWN



A FÊTE DAY AND EVENING IN A DUTCH TOWN

CURIOUS clattering noises, exclamations, the stamping of horses' feet on the cobblestones, the hum of a large crowd, salute one's ears early in the morning; a jangle of silvery-toned bells from the cathedral, then the clock striking seven on the bourdon, and the fête has begun. From the window one sees women with curious head-gear, silver-and-gold skull-caps covered with lace, from Friesland, Alkmaar, Monnikendam, Middelkirk, and Maarken,—caps with pinned-up lappets and all manner of queer ornaments dangling from either side of the temples,—gold twisted wire, diamond

sparks, forehead ornaments, coral beads,—the enormous winged caps of muslin from Leyden and beyond, and, prettiest of all, the orphan girls of Haarlem, who wear black skirts, snowy kerchiefs, and coquettishly modest muslin caps, long white mittens, and short sleeves above the elbow, one of red, the other of dark blue; they wear no bonnets winter or summer. They are bound for the *Kerk*; let us follow. The sound of the cathedral organ reaches us even in the market-place. Inside, the church is large, gloomy, and bare to ugliness, almost; the whitewashed walls gleam mysteriously in the early light. A few women are seated in the center on common wooden rush-bottomed chairs with high backs, and a scattering of men are in the carved penthouse pews that line the walls. A melancholy

cantique or so, a short *évangile*, a long prayer delivered in a half-hearted way by a cadaverous black-gowned minister, and a sermon ends the service. Then the collection is taken



up by two portly Heers with black velvet nightcap-looking bags on the end of long poles; and the congregation files slowly out into the market-place. Here long lines of booths have been erected, con-

taining almost everything under the sun, one would say ; and in the square, munching hay and oats from the tails of the tilted carts, are mighty hollow-backed Flemish horses whose heads are bristling with immense crimson tassels. A band is playing in a gaudy kiosk, and some of the peasants are dancing. Here and there are crowds about some one or another of the booths, listening to the chaffering and the smart sayings of a cheap John who is busily swindling the gullible with gaudy yellow chains of bogus metal, with a watch thrown in for luck. Dutch stolidity and phlegm there is, but also much good humor and cheerfulness. All manner of little peasant gigs, and farmers' hooded chaises perched up high in the air upon springs, the latter from the fenlands of the dried lake, are rapidly arriving



and adding their burdens to the throng. Some of the horses are quite handsome. In a field beyond a tent is pitched, and there is a pigeon-match going on for prizes which are, however, seldom won. Here comes a procession of a dozen or more little yellow and green varnished gigs filled with rosy-cheeked peasant girls, the flaps of their snowy caps bobbing up and down with the motion of the horses,— and all screaming and giggling in anticipation of the pleasures of the day. A wedding, some one near me explains, and points out the emblematic orange horse-cloth hanging behind the first gig, in which a young man in a brimless silk hat and a scarlet vest, and a charming young girl in a Maarken head-dress, with two long yellow curls hanging down each side of her rosy cheeks, are sitting side by side.

Each man drives sitting on the
left side with his right arm



about his maiden's waist, who
is busily throwing bonbons at

the crowd. The parents follow in fours in huge yellow chaises shaped like poke-bonnet covers, with glass sides; these are only for the married people. No unmarried peasant, youth or maid, ventures to drive in these covered tilburies. The procession drives on to the *Koffij Huis*, where they descend and partake of *Poffertije* and *Persico*, the latter a drink in which pounded peach-kernels are the chief ingredient. The crowd parts for the passage of an *Aanspraaker*, a tall strange figure dressed in lugubrious black small-clothes and silver-buckled shoes, black deep-flapped coat and waistcoat, his head crowned by a three-cornered hat and long weepers. He is the death-announcer, and is on his way to announce the death of some one to the friends of the family. Before a door hangs a curious square of lace,

in the center of which is a coat of arms. It is called a *Klopper*, and it announces a birth. My friend, the Yonkheer, explains



that when the Spaniards took Haarlem after the famous siege, they sent notice that all houses wherein lay a mother

and a new-born babe should have the knocker of the door muffled in white for a period, and so escape sacking — all births being thenceforward celebrated by what has now become an ornament on the doors, lined with white for a girl, and with pink for a boy. My friend, the Yonkheer, is everywhere addressed simply as Heer. The Dutch are very modest as to titles, and rarely address those who bear them save as Heer or Mynheer. Every one knows that they are barons or counts, so it would be thought snobbish to call them so. Charming simplicity!

As the wedding-party is bound for the neighboring village, where the ceremony is to take place, and as the welcome extended to my friend, the Yonkheer, includes myself, we mount a high-backed tilbury behind a hollow-backed

decorated horse, driven by a short-waistcoated, opera-hatted individual covered with ribbons, and speedily the long



procession of tilburies of which we are part leaves the noisy market-place behind and gains the open highway. Outside the

town the land is green, with pollards on its leas, long beds of waving river-grass along the miles of canals, mowed here and there, and with huge stacks for thatching purposes, — bright little cottages with red-tiled roofs, an occasional windmill lazily pumping water from one level to another. Small children in tight caps and shining brass-tipped sabots clatter along. Peasants pass yoked and laden with enormous brass milk-cans. Along raised dikes, grass-bordered and ankle deep in dust, turning out now and then for one of those long green straw-lined carts pulled by pairs of dappled sleek horses, move carts with the carven rail tilted up behind and the short gilt prow in front, by means of which Jan or Nikolaas guides its way to this side or that. Now we come to little white houses nestling beneath enormous overhanging

windmills, and now we cross an arm-upraised bridge, and the sea seems to close in upon us on either hand. Black and white cattle grazing by the roadside gaze at us stolidly — the cattle that Cuyp painted in the very pastures he loved. And now



the head of the procession halts before a house of some pretensions, set back among the trees.

There is an absurd little attempt at a drawbridge over a twenty-four-inch moat, which one must cross. Then appears

a lawn, perfectly flat, of course, but with some fine trees and a tiny piece of brownish water, presided over by a pseudo-classic temple bearing the extraordinary inscription: "*Lust in Rust.*" Every country house is sure to have such a piece of water and a similar temple where the host may enjoy his "Rust." We are welcomed at the door by the host and his portly dame, who, above her lovely lace cap with its pendant ornaments, has perched a Parisian monstrosity of a bonnet. We enter beneath arches of green and flags, and are received in a room where are exposed the presents of silver and gold and fine linen—chests of the latter!—and the groom offers us each a gilded pipe of clay, which it were a deadly insult to refuse. It is an old custom of which few know the origin. The room is a curious sight to

an American, savoring, as it does, of a room in the Cluny museum,—with its noble and massive walnut press, in which are the family linen and silver,



two old spinning-wheels and some furniture from Maarken, of great age and painted gaudily with biblical scenes; foot-stoves, which are still used, with a dish of hot embers placed in-

side, from which the hot air escapes through a myriad of small holes in the brass sides and top. The walls are glistening with tiles and brightly burnished brass and copper utensils of strange shapes, and there is a huge mahogany bucket lined with brass, containing embers, over which is placed a brass kettle, and which *always* is to be found beside every well-regulated Dutch breakfast- and tea-table (this kettle-bucket is one of the most characteristic objects one sees in Holland), and beside it a rack upon which hang the egg-lifters of solid silver. The kettle-bucket usually bears an inscription such as *Viel Plaisir* (Much pleasure).

The dinner was an interesting one to me, because of the peculiarly Dutch dishes served. It began with potato purée, flavored with cinnamon and containing balls of forcemeat,

followed by water-bass from the canal: this is esteemed as a



national delicacy, and is eaten with thin slices of rye bread.

Next came roast veal, with a curious sauce tasting of cinnamon; for vegetables we had potatoes cooked with butter, boiled endives, and bread-crumbed cabbage; then partridge, followed by liqueurs, such as cognac and aniseed, or a fine quality of *Genevre*, as the gin is politely called here. Dessert is always served in another room, where we join the ladies and partake of coffee served in the tiniest and most precious of old Japanese handleless cups of blue china with silver rims.

Then the mahogany peat-bucket and its attendant kettle are brought in by the servant, and the peat-box filled for the ladies' cheering-cup. The conversation is upon the last French novel,—for these people are great readers, and the language is as often French as Dutch,—of the races at The Hague, or on the coming *chasse* with sporting

dogs on the dunes. And so the evening passes at this typical Dutch country house until it is time to say good night. The last of the peasants have gone long since, the candles in the illuminations are going out and



dripping grease upon the flagging, and as our good nights are being said, the frogs under the temple of the "Lust in Rust" are comfortably croaking.

The horses are hitched again to the high-backed tilbury; we

mount, the Yonkheer and I, and
rattle across the absurd draw-
bridge, shining in the moonlight,



on our way back to town; while
upstairs, in that charming room
with its shining brass and gleam-

ing china treasures, is Jufrow washing her priceless cups and saucers, and replacing them in their satin-lined glass-case on the armoire.



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